

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SAM-01 ORM-01 SR-02 IO-10 AID-05

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 PC-01 OMB-01 TRSE-00

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R 131000Z MAY 75

FM AMCONSUL LUANDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3555

INFO AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SREF AO

SUBJECT: REFUGEE RELIEF PROGRAM; HEALTH MINISTER UNDER FIRE

1. MINISTER OF HEALTH SAMUEL ABRIGADA TOLD ME ON MAY 12 THAT THE TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT HAS ALLOTTED HIM A TOTAL OF 200,000 CONTOS (ABOUT 8,000,000 DOLLARS AT THE OFFICIAL EXCHANGE RATE), FOR THE REFUGEE RELIEF PROGRAM AND THAT HE HAS OBLIGATED 150,000 CONTOS. THE MONEY WILL BE SPENT LOCALLY FOR FOOD AND ABROAD FOR CLOTHING, MEDICINE, TOOLS AND SEEDS. NONE OF THE OVERSEAS SHIPMENTS HAS ARRIVED. ABRIGADA SAID THAT THE MPLA IS NOT BLOCKING THE PROGRAM, BUT THAT ON OCCASION MPLA OFFICIALS DRAG THEIR FEET, ESPECIALLY IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE.

2. THE MINISTER SAID HE HOPED THE UNITED STATES WOULD CHIP IN WITH A SIZEABLE DONATION AS HE IS FAR SHORT OF HIS 150,000,000 DOLLAR GOAL. I TOLD HIM WE PLAN TO CHANNEL OUR ASSISTANCE THROUGH THE UNITED NATIONS. I ALSO RELATED THE DETAILS OF THE

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BAPTIST CHURCH REFUGEE RELIEF PLAN AND MY INQUIRY TO WASHINGTON

ABOUT A CARE PROGRAM.

3. ABRIGADA SAID THAT ABOUT 250,000 REFUGEES HAVE NOW RETURNED TO ANGOLA. THE BULK ARE IN THE NORTH, 7,000 HAVE GONE INTO EASTERN ANGOLA FROM ZAMBIA AND 3,000 CAME FROM THE SHABA REGION OF ZAIRE TO AREAS AROUND NOVA LISBOA. THE GOVERNMENT STILL HAS NOT PUT INTO OPERATION ITS RECEPTION CENTERS OR RELOCATION SITES. THE RETURNEES FIND THEIR OWN WAY BACK AND GENERALLY SETTLE NEAR AREAS WHERE THEY HAD FORMERLY LIVED. THE REFUGEES COME IN TRUCKS, WHOSE OWNER-DRIVERS, IN MANY CASES, HAVE BEEN HELPED BY THE FNLA TO PURCHASE THEIR VEHICLES.

4. THE MINISTER CAME BACK FROM GENEVA A SHORT TIME AGO, WHERE HE HAD GONE TO ASK ABOUT THE ONE MILLION DOLLAR DONATION FROM THE UNHCR. UN OFFICIALS SAID THEY WERE SURPRISED TO SEE HIM AS THEY HAD A REPORT HE HAD ABSCONDED WITH 100,000 CONTOS. ABRIGADA THEN RECOUNTED TO ME HIS RAGE OVER THIS CALUMNY AND THE ARRANGEMENTS HE HAD MADE TO BRING SUIT AGAINST THE BBC, CERTAIN NEWSPAPERS IN PORTUGAL AND THE ANGOLAN MINISTER OF FINANCE (MPLA), WHO FIRST VOICED THE SLANDER WHILE ON A TRIP TO PORTUGAL. IT IS NOT YET ENTIRELY CLEAR WHAT HAPPENED, BUT IT HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED THAT ABRIGADA DID OBTAIN 100,000 CONTOS FROM THE CHIEF OF FINANCIAL SERVICES AFTER HE TOLD HIM THE PRESIDENTIAL COUNCIL HAD AUTHORIZED THE TRANSFER AND THAT A DOCUMENT WOULD BE ISSUED SHORTLY, BUT THAT ABRIGADA HAD IMMEDIATE NEED OF THE MONEY FOR THE REFUGEE PROGRAM.

5. ON HIS RETURN TO ANGOLA FROM GENEVA ABRIGADA HELD A PRESS CONFERENCE IN WHICH HE SAID HE DID NOT NEED MONEY; HE COULD EASILY MAKE 400,000 DOLLARS IN YEAR IN PRIVATE PRACTISE IN GERMANY. NOR COULD HE UNDERSTAND ALL THE FUSS ABOUT 100,000 CONTOS. TO THOSE WHO DON'T HAVE THAT MUCH IT SEEMS LIKE A LOT OF MONEY, BUT IT REALLY ISN'T.
KILLORAN

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